

IMAGINE SPACE – An American Corner at the Ottawa Public Library: A Makerspace

Fact Sheet

The United States Embassy in Ottawa (Embassy) and the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) are working together to launch *IMAGINE SPACE – an American Corner*, a Makerspace that will create a hands-on learning experience and collaborative environment to exchange ideas in pursuit of innovation. This collaboration between the Embassy and OPL is an extension of the vibrant and wide-ranging ties between the United States and Canada.

IMAGINE SPACE – an American Corner will be located in the Ottawa Public Library's Nepean CentrepoinTE branch, and is scheduled to open in early 2014.

The Embassy has provided funds to purchase Makerspace equipment, tools, and computers, as well as funding Makerspace programs. OPL will provide a space and funding for staff to manage and oversee activities and programs.

The goal of *IMAGINE SPACE – an American Corner* is to provide the public with new tools and technologies to promote innovation and learning, to connect design with social and economic change, to teach digital literacy, and digital artifact and digital media creation skills.

Libraries are places devoted to learning and discovery. In its May 2013 customer engagement campaign, IMAGINE, the OPL found strong community interest in new technologies and tools, and hands-on learning and creation. This space responds to that need, and aligns with the OPL's mission to help connect people to each other and world.

This collaboration offers the Embassy opportunities to explore new avenues for dialogue, exchange of ideas, and partnership with Canadians, especially youth, with emphasis on STEM fields and innovation and with the ultimate goal of increasing mutual understanding between our two countries.

Makerspaces

"Makerspaces" are creation and collaboration hubs, offering technologies and tools that allow users to experiment and to create, all in a social setting. Makerspaces are built on the premise that knowledge and learning is often better transmitted via sharing, collective problem solving, and task performance.

Makerspaces depend on collaboration between partners and with local makers. The partners intend to work with the existing maker community in Ottawa to involve them in sharing their expertise and experience with the equipment in the Makerspace.

American Corners/American Spaces

The American Corners Program is a U.S. Department of State-sponsored initiative inaugurated worldwide about the 2000. There are some 850 American Spaces in 169 countries that receive over 15 million visitors each year. (April 2013)

Corners are spaces in local institutions, such as libraries, that the U.S. government helps to support. Corners offer information about the U.S. or tools and technologies, and informative and engaging programs devoted to bilateral collaboration.